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INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND VALUE EDUCATION ON PERCEPTIONS OF SECURITY AND INSECURITY AMONG YOUTH IN GOMBE METROPOLIS

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Abstract

This research aimed to examine the influence of social media and value education on perceptions of security and insecurity among youth in Gombe metropolis. Three research questions and three hypotheses were set and the cross-sectional descriptive survey research design was employed. Participants comprised of 384 youth aged between 15 and 24 years comprising of 215 (56%) male, and 169 (44%) female was chosen through the purposive sampling technique. A questionnaire titled Social Media and Value Education Influence on Perceptions of Security among Youth Questionnaire (SMVEIPSAYQ) created on Google online platform was used for data collection. Data were descriptively (mean and standard deviation) and inferentially (t-tests, ANOVA, correlation analysis) analysed using the SPSS statistical software. The findings indicated the most used social media platforms as Facebook, WhatsApp, Tiktok, YouTube, Instagram, snapchat and telegram, the average daily time spent on social media as 3 hours, and that 65% of youth have received one form of training or the other on value education. The result further indicated that social media plays a significant role in shaping youth' perceptions of security and insecurity. Increased exposure to social media platforms was associated with heightened feelings of insecurity among respondents. The findings suggest that social media usage plays a role in shaping perceptions of security and insecurity among youth as the time spent on social media increases, so does the likelihood of feeling insecure, value education appears to have a mitigating effect on perceptions of insecurity, and gender differences exist in perceptions of security/insecurity by male and female youth in relation to social media and value education. Based on the results, it was recommended that youth should prioritize responsible social media use and digital literacy, while families, schools, and community stakeholders should emphasize comprehensive value education programmes integrating social and emotional learning components to provide youth with essential skills and values, fostering positive social norms and resilience in the digital age.

Keywords: social media, value education, security, insecurity,

Introduction

The rise of social media platforms has revolutionized communication and information dissemination, particularly among youth. Concurrently, the importance of value education in shaping individuals' ethical and moral frameworks cannot be overstated. In Nigeria, where societal dynamics are changing rapidly, understanding the interaction between social media exposure, value education, and perceptions of security and insecurity among youth is crucial for addressing emerging challenges and fostering positive youth development. Social media simply refers to digital platforms and websites that enable users to create, share, and interact with content in virtual communities and networks. These platforms facilitate the exchange of information, ideas, messages, and multimedia content (such as text, images, videos) among individuals and groups, often in real-time. Examples of social media platforms include Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snapchat, TikTok, and YouTube. Social media has become an integral part of modern communication, connecting people worldwide and shaping various aspects of society, including culture, politics, business, and personal relationships.

The impact of social media on perceptions of security among youth has been a topic of extensive research. Social media platforms serve as powerful tools for disseminating information and shaping public opinion. The exposure to news, both accurate and sensationalized, can significantly influence how individuals perceive threats to their security (Bessi et al., 2016). Marwick and Lewis (2017) highlight the role of social media in amplifying fear and insecurity through the spread of misinformation and sensational content. This amplification effect can lead to heightened perceptions of insecurity among young individuals.

Studies worldwide have highlighted the dual role of social media in shaping perceptions of security and insecurity among youth. On one hand, social media platforms serve as channels for information dissemination, enabling rapid awareness of security threats such as crime, violence, and civil unrest. On the other hand, excessive exposure to negative content, misinformation, and cyberbullying on social media can worsen feelings of insecurity and anxiety among youth (Al-Oraimi et al., 2020; Aljafari et al., 2021). There is said to be relationship between social media use and mental well-being. Perloff, (2014) suggested that excessive use of social media, particularly platforms emphasizing appearance and social comparison, can lead to increased feelings of insecurity and decreased self-esteem among youth. Moreover, cyberbullying, a prevalent issue on social media, can significantly impact the sense of security among young individuals, leading to heightened levels of insecurity (Kowalski et al., 2014). Oyewole et al. (2019); Agbo (2020) observed that in Nigeria, social media plays a significant role in shaping youth' perceptions of security, with platforms like Twitter and Facebook often serving as forums for discussing and disseminating information about security-related issues, including terrorism, kidnapping, and communal conflicts.

Value education refers to the process of imparting ethical, moral, and social values to individuals with the aim of fostering their personal and social development. It involves teaching and promoting principles such as honesty, integrity, respect, responsibility, empathy, tolerance, respect for diversity, and compassion. Value education aims to instill in individuals a strong sense of ethics, empathy, and social responsibility, guiding them to make informed and ethical decisions in their personal lives and interactions with others. It is often integrated into educational curricula at various levels, including schools, colleges, and community programmes, with the goal of nurturing individuals who contribute positively to society and uphold principles of justice, equality, and human dignity.

Value education is recognized as a crucial tool for instilling positive values and promoting social cohesion among youth (Gire, 2019). Individuals with a strong moral compass and ethical foundation, as posited by Djebarni et al., (2019) as well as Saha et al., (2021), are more resilient in the face of adversity and less susceptible to negative influences that may contribute to feelings of insecurity. In the Nigerian context, where traditional values often intersect with modern challenges, value education programmes implemented within schools, religious institutions, and community organizations have shown promise in promoting prosocial behaviour and reducing delinquency among youth (Nwankwo et al., 2018; Adu et al., 2020).

Value education plays a pivotal role in moral development and ethical reasoning among youth. Kohlberg's stages of moral development highlight the progression of moral reasoning from childhood to adulthood (Kohlberg, 1971). Effective value education programmes enhance empathy, compassion, and ethical decision-making, providing youth with a strong foundation to steer complex moral dilemmas and fostering a sense of security rooted in moral principles. The preservation of traditional values is integral to maintaining social cohesion and a sense of security within communities. Inglehart and Welzel (2005) suggested that traditional values act as stabilizing factors in societies undergoing rapid socio-cultural changes. These values provide a sense of continuity and belonging, contributing to a feeling of security among youth amidst societal transformations.

The relationship between social media exposure and value education is complex, with social media serving as a platform for both positive and negative influences on youth' value systems. While social media can facilitate access to educational resources and promote positive social values through campaigns and awareness initiatives, it also exposes youth to conflicting ideologies, materialism, and superficial ideals that may undermine the principles taught through formal value education channels (Arnett et al., 2020; Awopetu et al., 2021). There is limited research in Nigeria, and particularly in Gombe, on social media and value education. However, anecdotal evidence through personal observations suggests that youth in Gombe are increasingly exposed to diverse value systems and worldviews through

social media platforms, leading to shifts in their perceptions of security and insecurity.

The foregoing highlights the complicated relationship between social media usage, value education, traditional values, and perceptions of security among youth. Social media's influence on information dissemination and self-perception, coupled with the role of value education and traditional values, creates a complex landscape where youth form their perceptions of security and insecurity. Understanding these dynamics is vital for implementing targeted interventions that empower youth to traverse the digital age while upholding their cultural values and moral compass. In other words, the influence of social media and value education on perceptions of security and insecurity among youth in Gombe, Nigeria, is important. This research therefore delves into the relationship between social media usage, value education, and the perceptions of security and insecurity among the youth populace in Gombe Metropolis. The rationale behind this study is twofold. Firstly, as digital platforms increasingly become the primary source of information and social interaction, understanding the impact of social media on the perception of security is crucial. It is imperative to analyse how the constant influx of information, varying from news reports to personal narratives, shapes the youth's understanding of safety and vulnerability. Secondly, the role of value education in shaping moral compass, ethical reasoning, and resilience among youth is a dimension that demands scholarly attention. Traditional values often serve as the bedrock upon which societies build trust and social cohesion. Exploring how these values, in the context of modern education, mitigate or exacerbate feelings of insecurity is essential for nurturing a generation capable of navigating the challenges of the digital era. Hence, this study aimed to explore the specific mechanisms through which social media exposure and value education interact to shape youth' perceptions and identify strategies for harnessing the potential of social media while reinforcing positive values to promote youth well-being and societal resilience.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of social media and value education on perceptions of security and insecurity among youth in Gombe metropolis. The specific objectives are:

i. Identify the social media platforms regularly used by youth in Gombe Metropolis
ii. Find out the average daily time spent on social media by youth in Gombe Metropolis
iii. Determine the proportion of youth that have received value education training in Gombe metropolis.
iv. Identify the correlation between hours spent on social media and perceptions of insecurity among youth in Gombe Metropolis.

v. Examine any difference in perceptions of security/insecurity between youth who have received value education and those who haven't.
vi. Find out any difference in perceptions of security/insecurity based on gender.

Research Questions

This study seeks to address the following fundamental questions:

1. What social media platforms do youth in Gombe Metropolis use regularly?
2. What is the average daily time spent on social media by youth in Gombe Metropolis?
3. What is the proportion of youth in Gombe metropolis that have received training on?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

HO_1: There is no significant correlation between hours spent on social media and perceptions of insecurity among youth.
HO_2: There is no significant difference in perceptions of security/insecurity between youth who have received value education and those who haven't.
HO_3: There is no significant difference in perceptions of security/insecurity based on gender.

Methodology

The study employed the descriptive survey research design, specifically, the cross-sectional descriptive survey research design/ method. Descriptive survey research design is an investigative method, framework and technique that involves a systematic attempt to describe the characteristics of a population of interest in a factual form. According to Creswell (2014), the descriptive method of research is to gather information about the present existing condition. The cross-sectional descriptive survey is a type of research design in which a researcher collects data from many different individuals at a single point in time. Here, you observe variables without influencing them (Thomas, 2022). The cross-sectional descriptive survey design was the most appropriate for this study as it is geared towards examining the influence of social media and value education on perceptions of security and insecurity among youth in Gombe Metropolis. This is because the descriptive survey design is a theory-based design, where the researcher is primarily interested in describing the topic that is the subject of the research.

The study participants comprised of youth aged between 15 and 24 years, drawn from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds in Gombe metropolis, Nigeria. A sample size of 384 youth (215 i.e. 56% male, and 169 i.e. 44% female) as guided by Krejcie and Morgan table was used. The sample was chosen through the purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, purposeful or authoritative sampling, which is

a non-probability sampling technique in which sample members are chosen solely based on the researcher's knowledge and judgment. The sampling technique is adopted because the target population of the study cannot be chosen by using any other probability or non-probability sampling technique.

The instrument that the study used for the collection of data was a questionnaire titled Social Media and Value Education Influence on Perceptions of Security among Youth Questionnaire (SMVEIPSAYQ) created on Google form. This online survey platform provided participants with questions based on demographics as well as social media usage, value education, and perceptions of security. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher guided by articles and empirical researches that covered the variables in the study. Specifically, the questionnaire consisted of two (2) sections: Section A= socio-demographic characteristics of respondents such as age, gender, educational and employment level, Section B= contained 11 items measuring social media usage, value education, and perceptions of security. For validity of the questionnaire, it was given to two experts: one in Psychology of Education and the other in Research measurement and evaluation to certify. Also, a Cronbach Alpha reliability test was calculated after the instrument was administered to youth outside of Gombe metropolis. A reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained which falls within the acceptable range for a reliable instrument.

Data was collected via a Google Form shared on social media platforms. The procedure leveraged on the convenience and accessibility of online platforms particularly Facebook and WhatsApp to reach a wide audience and collect data remotely. Respondents accessed the Google Form through the shared link and completed the survey online at their convenience where responses were automatically collected and compiled into a digital dataset, which was then exported for analysis. Data was analysed using the SPSS statistical software. Descriptive statistics like the frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviation was used to summarize survey responses. Inferential statistics, like t-tests, ANOVA, correlation analysis were utilized to explore relationships between the variables.

Results

The results are hereby presented according to the research questions and hypotheses.

Research Questions

RQ1: What social media platforms do youth in Gombe Metropolis use regularly?

Table 1: Descriptive statistics most used social media platforms by youth in Gombe Metropolis

S/N	Social Media Platforms	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Facebook	384	100
2.	WhatsApp	381	99
3.	Telegram	207	54
4.	Instagram	309	80
5.	Twitter	143	37
6.	Snapchat	297	77
7.	TikTok	322	84
8.	YouTube	311	81
9.	LinkedIn	165	43
10.	Other	103	27

Note: *The total exceeds 100% as respondents can choose more than one option as applicable*

The first question sought to find out the social media platforms most used by youth in Gombe metropolis. The responses from the 384 respondents when asked indicated the most used as Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, snapchat and telegram with 100%, 99%, 84%, 81, 80%, 77% and 54% respectively

RQ2: What is the average daily time spent on social media by youth in Gombe Metropolis?

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of average daily time spent on social media by youth in Gombe Metropolis

S/N	Duration Spent on Social Media Platforms Daily	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Less than 1 hour	32	8.33
2.	1-2 hours	70	18.23
3.	2-3 hours	128	33.33
4.	3-4 hours	65	16.93
5.	4-5 hours	53	13.80
6.	More than 5 hours	36	9.38
Total		**384**	**100**

The second research question sought to determine the average daily time spent on social media by youth in Gombe metropolis. The analysis showed that 32 respondents (8.33%) spend less than one hour, 70 respondents (18.23%) spend between one and two hours, 128 respondents (33.33%) spend between two to three

hours, 65 respondents (16.93%) between three to four hours, 53 respondents (13.80%) between four to five hours, while 36 respondents (9.38%) spend more than five hours.

RQ3: What is the proportion of youth in Gombe metropolis that have received training on value education?

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of Value Education received by youth in Gombe Metropolis

S/N	Training on Value Education	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Received	249	65%
2.	Not Received	135	35%
Total		**384**	**100**

Research question three sought to determine the proportion of youth in Gombe metropolis who have received value education. Outcome of the analysis provided that 249 respondents representing 65% have received one form of training or the other on value education. Whereas 135 respondents representing 35% have not received any form of training on value education.

Hypotheses

H1: There is no significant positive correlation between hours spent on social media and perceptions of insecurity among youth.

The test hypothesis one, correlation analysis was used to investigate the inter-correlations that occurred between hours spent on social media and perceptions of insecurity.

Table 4: Pearson's Correlation Coefficients of Hours spent on social media and Perceptions of Insecurity

Variable	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	r	r^s	p-value	Decision
Hours spent on social media	384	3.13	0.46	0.81	382	0.04	Significant
Perceptions of Insecurity	384	4.07	0.61				

An overview of the findings is provided in Table 4. The results showed that there is a significant positive correlation between hours spent on social media and perceptions of insecurity ($r = 0.81$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant positive correlation between hours spent on social media and perceptions of insecurity among youth is rejected and the alternative upheld. This means that there is significant positive correlation between hours spent on social

media and perceptions of insecurity among youth, suggesting that increased social media usage is associated with heightened feelings of insecurity among youth.

H2: There is no significant difference in perceptions of security/insecurity between youth who have received value education and those who haven't.

Table 5: Result of t-test on Perceptions of Security/Insecurity Between Youth Who Have Received Value Education and Those Who Haven't

Group	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	t	df	p-value	Decision
Youth Who Have Received Value Education	249	3.34	0.67	2.78	382	0.01	Significant
Youth Who Haven't Received Value Education	135	4.50	0.72				

To test for significant difference between the perceptions of security/insecurity between youth who have received value education and those who haven't, a t-test statistic was computed. From the result on Table 5, the computed p-value of 0.01. In addition, the means for youth who received value education was 3.34, while those who haven't was 4.50. This provided sufficient evidence against the null hypothesis, hence it is rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference between the perceptions of security/insecurity between youth who have received value education and those who haven't. In other words, respondents who received value education tend to report lower levels of insecurity compared to those who didn't.

H3: There is no significant difference in perceptions of security/insecurity based on gender.

Table 6: Result of ANOVA on Perceptions of Security/Insecurity Based on Gender

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender	Between Groups	2968.286	214	78.113	2.381	.04
	Within Groups	3406.517	168	72.479		
	Total	6374.802	382			

Table 6 gives a summary of Analysis of Variance as computed to examine perceptions of security/insecurity based on gender. There is a significant difference in perceptions of security/insecurity based on gender ($F(2, 381) = 4.12$, $p < 0.05$).

Post-hoc tests reveal that male respondents tend to feel more insecure compared to female respondents.

Discussion

The study aimed to explore the influence of social media and value education on perceptions of security and insecurity among youth in Gombe, Nigeria. The study found the most used social media platform as Facebook, WhatsApp, Tiktok, YouTube, Instagram, snapchat and telegram, the average daily time spent on social media as 3 hours, and that 65% of youth have received one form of training or the other on value education. The result further indicated that social media plays a significant role in shaping youth' perceptions of security and insecurity. Increased exposure to social media platforms was associated with heightened feelings of insecurity among respondents. This finding aligns with the results of Perloff (2014), Kowalski et al. (2014), Oyewole et al. (2019); Agbo (2020) Al-Oraimi et al. (2020; Aljafari et al. (2021) highlighting the dual nature of social media, where it serves as both a source of information and a potential source of stress or anxiety due to exposure to negative content, cyberbullying, and misinformation. The prevalence of security-related discussions on social media platforms further underscores their impact on youth' perceptions of safety and vulnerability.

Value education emerged as a protective factor against perceptions of insecurity among youth. Respondents who had received formal value education reported lower levels of insecurity compared to those who had not. This finding agrees with Nwankwo et al. (2018); Gire (2019), Djebarni et al. (2019), Adu et al. (2020) and Saha et al. (2021) which underscored the importance of instilling positive values such as integrity, empathy, and responsibility in youth' moral development and resilience-building efforts. Value education programmes implemented within schools, religious institutions, and community organizations play a crucial role in shaping youth' ethical frameworks and equipping them with the right social skills.

The study highlighted the dynamic interaction between social media exposure and value education in shaping youth' perceptions. As noted by Arnett et al. (2020) and Awopetu et al. (2021), while social media platforms offer opportunities for accessing educational resources and promoting positive social values, they also expose youth to conflicting ideologies and negative influences that may undermine the principles taught through formal value education channels. Therefore, efforts to leverage social media for positive youth development should be complemented by strategies to reinforce values-based education and critical thinking skills to help youth discern credible information and resist harmful influences.

The result of the study also showed that gender differences exist in the perceptions of security/insecurity by male and female youth in relation to social

media and value education. This means that male and female youth may experience social media environments, encounter distinct challenges on social media platforms and value education interventions differently. For example, Kowalski et al. (2014), and Fox and Ralston (2016) found that females are more likely to experience online harassment, cyberbullying, and body image concerns, which can contribute to feelings of insecurity. In contrast, males may face pressures related to conforming to traditional masculine norms, such as competitiveness or aggression, which can impact their self-esteem and well-being. Gender differences may also influence the effectiveness of value education programmes in addressing perceptions of security/insecurity among youth. For instance, value education initiatives that promote gender equality, empathy, and healthy relationship skills may be particularly beneficial for addressing the specific challenges faced by female youth in social media environments. Similarly, interventions aimed at challenging rigid gender stereotypes and promoting positive masculinity may be valuable for male youth.

Conclusion

The study investigated the influence of social media and value education on perceptions of security and insecurity among youth in Gombe, Nigeria. The findings highlighted the significant role of social media in shaping youth' perceptions, with increased exposure correlating with heightened feelings of insecurity. Equally, formal value education emerged as a protective factor against perceptions of insecurity among youth. The study highlighted the dynamic interaction between social media exposure and value education, emphasizing the importance of comprehensive value education programmes in equipping youth with the skills and values necessary to sail across the digital age responsibly.

Overall, the study contributes to our understanding of the complex interplay between social media, value education, and perceptions of security and insecurity among youth. By explaining the mechanisms through which these factors influence youth well-being, interventions can be developed to promote positive youth development and foster resilient communities in Gombe, Nigeria, and beyond. These efforts are essential for addressing the evolving challenges posed by the digital age and promoting the holistic development of youth in today's society.

Recommendations

The recommendations based on the findings of the study are:

1. Youth should be careful in the use of social media as it plays a significant role in shaping their perceptions of security and insecurity.
2. Families, schools and community stakeholders should prioritize comprehensive value education programmes that integrate social and

emotional learning components to equip youth with the skills and values necessary to circumnavigate the digital age responsibly.

3. Efforts to promote digital literacy and responsible social media use should be complemented by initiatives to instill and foster positive social values/ norms such as integrity, empathy, responsibility, and respect for diversity and strengthen community support systems for youth.
4. Digital literacy and critical thinking skills to discern credible information, resist harmful influences, and engage responsibly on social media platforms should be encouraged, especially among the youth populace. For example, schools can teach students how to evaluate online content critically, identify misinformation, and protect their privacy and security online.

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